

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An in-vehicle occupant image pickup apparatus comprising:
an image pickup unit for shooting a face of an occupant of a vehicle,
5 wherein the image pickup unit is located in a blind spot for the occupant, behind a
hood that is provided in a dashboard of the vehicle; and
a mirror installed in an instrument panel on the dashboard, wherein
reflection in the mirror enables the image pickup unit to pick up an image of the face
of the occupant
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2. An in-vehicle occupant image pickup apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein the image pickup unit includes an infrared/near-infrared camera that picks up
an image of the face, and an infrared/near-infrared-emitting element that illuminates
the face; and
15 wherein the mirror is made up of a cold filter that reflects infrared/near-
infrared rays and transmits visible rays.
3. An in-vehicle occupant image pickup apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein the image pickup unit includes a camera that picks up an image of the face;
20 and
wherein the mirror is made up of a half mirror.

4. An in-vehicle occupant image pickup apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein the image pickup unit includes:

a camera that picks up an image of the face and outputs a digital image
signal;

5 a digital image processor that manipulates the digital image signal; and

a substrate on which the camera and the digital image processor are both
mounted.

5. An in-vehicle instrument panel unit which is equipped with an in-
10 vehicle image pickup apparatus according to claim 1.